

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claim 1 (Currently Amended)

A method for operating a dishwasher comprising:

(a) loading a dishwasher with items in need of washing;

(b) closing said loaded dishwasher;

(c) steaming said items in a water saturated atmosphere at a pressure of greater than about 15 psi, a temperature of ~~equal to or~~ greater than about 100 °C, a time of equal to or greater than about 15 minutes; and

(d) after said steaming, washing said items in said dishwasher with soap and water to clean said items,

wherein said steaming is conducted prior to any washing with water.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended)

In a method for operating a dishwasher where items in a closed dishwasher are washed with soap and water and subsequently dried, the improvement comprising steaming said items in a closed dishwasher prior to said items being washed with water, said steam cleaning being conducted in a water saturated atmosphere, at a pressure of ~~equal to or~~ greater than about 15 psi, a temperature of ~~equal to or~~

greater than about 100 °C, a time of equal to or greater than about 15 minutes.

Claim 3 (New Claim)

The method of claim 1 wherein said steaming is accomplished by injecting steam from an external steam generating unit through a nozzle and into said dishwasher.

Claim 4 (New Claim)

The method of claim 2 wherein said steaming is accomplished by injecting steam from an external steam generating unit through a nozzle and into said dishwasher.